

Complete Emergency Resource Information

Emergency Resource Center

LATEST NEWS

President Bush Declares WNY a Major Disaster Area

On Tuesday October 24th, President Bush declared Western New York a major disaster area. This designation triggers the release of federal funds to help individuals and communities recover from the severe October snowstorm. It is imperative that individuals contact their insurance company, keep all storm-related receipts, and register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to determine their eligibility for federal reimbursement. Individuals can register with FEMA by calling 1-800-621-FEMA or visiting www.fema.gov. Rep. Slaughter and her staff stand ready to assist Western New Yorkers navigate the federal reimbursement process.

Individuals registering with FEMA should have the following information on-hand:

Social Security number.

Current and pre-disaster address.

A telephone number where you can be contacted.

Insurance information.

Total household annual income

A routing and account number from your bank (only necessary if you want to have disaster assistance funds transferred directly into your bank account)

A description of your losses that were caused by the disaster

IRS Extends Tax Filings for Those Affected by the Storm

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[Click here to view the official IRS News Release](#)

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[Click here to view Rep. Slaughter's Press Release](#)

IMPORTANT EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS:

Buffalo and Erie County citizens in need following electricity outages can contact the following emergency numbers:

- Emergency Power Outage: 1-800-Niagara
- Erie County Line: 716-681-6670
- City of Buffalo Line: 716-851-4890
- Customer Service Number for the National Grid: 1-800-642-4272
- Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority: 716-836-4954

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS FOR AID AND RELIEF:

- [Click here for Information on American Red Cross Emergency Shelters.](#)
- [Click here for Information on Federal efforts to recover from the storm.](#)
- [Click here for a FEMA publication, "Help After a Disaster: Applicant's Guide to the Individuals & Households Program.](#)
- [Click here to apply for Public Assistance through FEMA.](#)

REP. SLAUGHTER'S ACTIONS - PRESS RELEASES:

- October 25, 2006 - Joint Statement by Senators Schumer, Clinton, and Representatives Higgins and Slaughter, on Approval of Major Disaster Declaration

- October 18, 2006 - Joint Statement by Senators Schumer, Clinton, and Representatives Higgins, Slaughter, and Reynolds on Expediting Major Disaster Declaration

- October 16, 2006 - Slaughter Urges Pataki to Request FEMA Aid for Individual Homeowners

- October 16, 2006 - Slaughter Secures Extension of Tax Deadline Following Winter Storm

- October 15, 2006 - President Bush Issues Emergency Declaration for New York State

- October 13, 2006 - Slaughter Urges Declaration of Emergency Following Snowstorm

TIPS FOR AVOIDING POST-DISASTER SCAMS

When a natural disaster strikes, we want to get our lives back to normal as quickly as possible. However, it is important that we protect ourselves from the scams that sometimes accompany the recovery process. Below are tips published by the Better Business Bureau on how you can protect yourself for disaster recovery scams and repair damages successfully:

- For major permanent repairs, take time to shop around for contractors, get competitive bids,
- and check out references.

- Be wary of door-to-door workers who claim your home is unsafe. If you are concerned about
- possible structural damage in your home, have an engineer, architect, or building official
- inspect it.

- Prepare a written agreement with anyone you hire. It should delineate the work to be done,
- the materials to be used, and the price breakdown for both labor and materials. Review it
- carefully before signing. Never pay for all repairs in advance, and don't pay cash.

- Verify the credentials of anyone offering you low-interest government loans. Beware of loan
- scams that require you to pay an upfront fee for "application processing". In these scams,
- once the application fee is paid the supposed lender is never heard from again.

- Be sure to ask for identification from anyone who stops by your home claiming to be a
- government official. These scam artists claim that they can help you qualify for assistance
- for a "processing fee" or they masquerade as safety inspectors or utility repair workers who
- claim that immediate work is required, for which you are required.

EMERGENCY TIPS FROM THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Staying Warm Indoors

If your heat goes out during a winter storm, you can keep warm by closing off rooms you do not need.

- 1. Use only safe sources of alternative heat such as a fireplace, small well-vented wood or coal stove or portable space heaters. Always follow manufacturer's instructions.
- 2. Dress in layers of lightweight clothing and wear a cap.
- 3. Eat well-balanced meals.

Losing your heat when winter's winds are howling is not pleasant. However, by following these simple tips, you will weather the storm more comfortably.

Protecting Water Pipes

To prevent the mess and aggravation of frozen water pipes, protect your home, apartment or business by following the simple steps below.

Before Cold Weather

- 1. Locate and insulate pipes most susceptible to freezing, typically those near outer walls, in crawl spaces or in the attic.
- 2. Wrap pipes with heat tape (UL approved).
- 3. Seal any leaks that allow cold air inside where pipes are located.
- 4. Disconnect garden hoses and shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

When It's Cold

- 1. Let hot and cold water trickle at night from a faucet on an outside wall.
- 2. Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to un-insulated pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall.

- 3. Make sure heat is left on and set no lower than 55 degrees.
- 4. If you plan to be away: (1) Have someone check your house daily to make sure the heat is still on to prevent freezing, or (2) drain and shut off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).

If Pipes Freeze

- 1. Make sure you and your family knows how to shut off the water, in case pipes burst. Stopping the water flow minimize the damage to your home. Call a plumber and contact your insurance agent.
- 2. Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.
- 3. Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water.

If The Lights Go Out

If you lose electrical service during the winter, follow these tips:

- 1. Call your utility first to determine area repair schedules. Turn off or unplug lights and appliances to prevent a circuit overload when service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate power has been restored.
- 2. To help prevent freezing pipes, turn on faucets slightly. Running water will not freeze as quickly.
- 3. Protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- DO NOT operate generators indoors; the motor emits deadly carbon monoxide gas.
- DO NOT use charcoal to cook indoors. It, too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas.
- DO NOT use your gas oven to heat your home -- prolonged use of an open oven in a closed house can create carbon monoxide gas.
- Make sure fuel space heaters are used with proper ventilation.
- 4. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.

Generator Safety

Electric generators can provide you with piece of mind and convenience when you are faced with a temporary loss of electric service.

Follow these safety guidelines when operating a generator:

- 1. Before installing a generator, be sure to properly disconnect from your utility electrical service. If possible, have your generator installed by a qualified electrician.
- 2. Run generators outside, downwind of structures. NEVER run a generator indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator's exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces. Install a carbon monoxide detector.
- 3. Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. If your generator has a detachable fuel tank remove it before refilling. If this is not possible, shut off the generator and let it cool before refilling.
- 4. Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Most of the small, home-use portable generators produce from 350 to 12,000 watts of power. Overloading your generator can damage it, the appliances connected to it, and may cause a fire. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- 5. Keep children away from generators at all times.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent, deadly killer claiming about 1,000 lives each year in the United States. Such common items as automotive exhaust, home heating systems and obstructed chimneys can produce the colorless, odorless gas.

The gas can also be produced by poorly vented generators, kerosene heaters, gas grills and other items used for cooking and heating when used improperly during the winter months.

- 1. NEVER run generators indoors. Open a window slightly when using a kerosene heater.
- 2. NEVER use charcoal to cook indoors.
- 3. NEVER use a gas oven to heat your home.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headaches and dizziness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, ventilate the area and get to a hospital.

Fire Safety

Wood-burning stoves, fireplaces and heaters can add a cozy glow, but make sure you are using them safely.

- 1. Always keep a screen around an open flame.
- 2. Never use gasoline to start your fireplace.
- 3. Never burn charcoal indoors.
- 4. Do not close the damper when ashes are hot.
- 5. When using alternative heat sources such as a fireplace, woodstove, etc. always make sure you have proper ventilation. Keep curtains, towels and potholders away from hot surfaces.
- 6. Have your chimney checked before the season for creosote buildup -- and then clean it.
- 7. Have a fire extinguisher and smoke detectors ... and make sure they work! Establish a well-planned escape route with the entire family.

Kerosene Heaters

If you use kerosene heaters to supplement your regular heating fuel, or as an emergency source of heat, follow these safety tips:

- 1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- 2. Use only the correct fuel for your unit.
- 3. Refuel outdoors ONLY and only when the unit is cool.
- 4. Keep the heater at least three feet away from furniture and other flammable objects.
- 5. When using the heater, use fire safeguards and ventilate properly.

Remember, the fire hazard is greatly increased in the winter because alternate heating sources often are used without following proper safety precautions.

Clearing Your Roof

As the snow and ice continues to build up, homeowners should think about safety before trying to clear the snow from their roof.

Here are some safety tips:

- 1. When possible, use long-handled snow rakes or poles.
- 2. If you must use a ladder, make certain that the base is securely anchored. Ask a friend, neighbor or adult family member to hold the ladder while you climb.
- 3. Know where the snow is going to fall before clearing the area.
- 4. Make certain not to contact electrical wires.
- 5. If possible, do not attempt to clear the roof alone.
- 6. If you are afraid of heights or think the job is too big for you, HIRE HELP.